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10/696,577	10/30/2003	Hiroyuki Nagano	4635-004	7209
22429 7590 08/06/2008 LOWE HAUPTMAN HAM & BERNER, LLP 1700 DIAGONAL ROAD SUITE 300 ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314			EXAMINER SHAH, MILAP	
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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

DETAILED ACTION

This action is in response to the amendment received on April 22, 2008. The Examiner acknowledges that claims 2, 4, 5, 13, & 21-24 were amended, claims 1, 11, & 17 were canceled, and no new claims were added. Therefore, claims 2, 4-10, 13-16, & 19-24 are currently pending.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 2, 4-10, 13-16, & 19-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rasmussen et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0053699) in view of Koizumi (U.S. Patent No. 5,452,025) & Brawley, Jr. (U.S. Patent No. 7,278,513).

Claims 5, 7-9, 19, & 21-24: Rasmussen et al. disclose the invention substantially as claimed including a gaming machine comprising a cabinet in which various components are housed, including a display device (figure 4[display 60]) for showing images, sound generating devices (speakers are inherently enclosed in the cabinet per disclosure of the speaker bar 40 of figure 4) integrated within the cabinet for generating sound according to the game, and sound transmitting holes (figure 4[speaker bar 40]) positioned such that sound coming from the sound generating devices exits the sound transmitting holes (figure 4[speaker bar 40]). Rasmussen et al. also disclose a door that defines a front face of the cabinet, which is openable to allow access to the interior of the cabinet (figure 4 shows the gaming machine with the door and figure 5 shows the gaming

machine without the door, see also description of figures 4 & 5). The door includes openings for the display device and sound transmitting holes (sound bar 40).

Rasmussen et al. specifically lack disclosing:

(a) the sound transmitting holes are specifically positioned coelevational with the opening for the display device;

(b) sound transmitting passages extend from the sound generating devices to the sound transmitting holes;

(c) each of the sound generating devices are entirely disposed rearwardly from the screen and spaced from the respective sound transmitting holes.

(d) the specific formation or shape of the sound transmitting passage is one that has side walls in a trapezoidal shape, thereby creating differences in cross sections as the passages extend forwardly from a rear of the cabinet to the front of the cabinet where the sound transmitting holes are located. Further, as Rasmussen et al. lack this specific formation, it also lacks the sound transmitting passages having (d1) a substantially constant width and a height that increases as each of the sound transmitting passages extends towards the respective sound transmitting holes, (d2) the length or height of the rectangular cross sections of the passage increase as each transmitting passage extends towards the respective sound transmitting holes, and (d3) each of the trapezoidal walls has a shorter and longer base (i.e. a property of being trapezoidal), wherein the longer base is disposed forward of and parallel with the shorter base (note: each of (d1)-(d3) are specific properties or characteristics of having trapezoidal side walls); and

(e) each sound generating device is coaxially fitted in the respective sound transmitting passages.

However, Koizumi discloses a similar display device setup that is capable of being implemented in the cabinet of Rasmussen et al. Koizumi discloses a prior art display device that includes sound generating devices (figure 5[speaker 3]) being disposed to the rear of the display device setup such that fixed sound transmitting passages extend forwardly from each respective sound generating device to the respective sound transmitting holes on the front of the display setup (see at least abstract & figure 5). One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to modify the gaming machine and cabinet disclosed by Rasmussen et al. with similar sound transmitting passages to propagate any game sounds in such an area that the player could easily hear the sound of the game. It is well known in the art that casinos are very noisy places with the sounds of hundreds, even thousands, of gaming machines being played, each having game sounds. Thus, it would have been desirable to direct sound via a suitable waveguide or acoustic directional horn, such that, excessive volumes from gaming machines would no longer be necessary. This display setup also explicitly teaches that the sound transmitting passages are positioned coelevational with the opening for the display device, the sound generating devices are entirely disposed rearwardly of the screen, and spaced from the respective sound transmitting holes (figure 5).

Brawley, Jr. teaches a sound transmitting passage or better known in the audio arts as a waveguide, horn, acoustic horn, trumpet or the like. Those of ordinary skill in the art would recognize the vast number of different waveguides available or known in the art (see all the cited references of record) for the purpose of increasing the efficiency of sound transmission by allowing a low volume sound to be attenuated into a higher volume sound using nothing more than a passage which increasing area allowing wave propagation. Brawley, Jr. also teaches sound waves gain kinetic energy as the air mass within the horn passes through the restrictions of the passage, where the air mass may progressively expand as a sound wave and eventually reach listeners. Further, Brawley, Jr. teaches the creation of

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cylindrical sound radiation via the increasing area of the horn (column 3, line 36 – column 4, line 4). This horn disclosed by Brawley, Jr. is one of an equivalent shape to Applicant's claimed shape of a sound transmitting passage that has side walls in a trapezoidal shape, thereby creating differences in cross sections as the sound passages extend forwardly. Brawley, Jr. also teach the sound generating device (figure 2[driver unit 202]) is coaxially fitted in the sound transmitting passage. Further, this horn includes the properties earlier discussed in parts (c1)-(c3) above, where the passage has a substantially constant width with an increasing height, the length or height of the rectangular cross sections of the passage increase as each transmitting passage extends towards the respective sound transmitting holes, and each of the trapezoidal walls has a shorter and longer base, wherein the longer base is disposed forward of and parallel with the shorter base. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to replace each of the sound transmitting passages of Koizumi with respective sound transmitting passages taught by Brawley, Jr. for at least the advantages that Brawley, Jr. recognizes with such a sound transmitting passage shape.

Thus, the Examiner has shown, with specific evidence, each of the claimed elements as known elements in the prior art.

Therefore, it would have required mere routine skill in the art by those of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine known elements to yield a predictable and expected result of a game machine having sound transmitting passages in the arrangement discussed above, with at least the added advantages and benefits disclosed by both Koizumi and Brawley, Jr. Those of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to combine Rasmussen et al., Koizumi, and Brawley, Jr. to produce an equivalent display setup as disclosed by Koizumi in the game machine cabinet disclosed by Rasmussen with the specific shape/formation of sound transmitting passages as taught by Brawley, Jr. for at least the following additional reasons: (1) Brawley, Jr. teaches that this specific shape of a sound

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transmitting passage has certain benefits (which are apparent from column 3, line 36 - column 4, line 4). The Applicant also notes similar advantages to a similar claimed shape of the sound transmitting passage, thus, it can be seen that these certain advantages are present in the prior art, and thus would not be an unexpected result of having a sound transmitting passage in that shape; (2) Koizumi discloses that the prior art set up of figure 5 has one problem of sound deterioration because of the long narrow sound transmitting passage, thus, Brawley, Jr. solve such a problem; and (3) Koizumi teaches that these types of setups accommodate the need for superior sound quality where space for accommodating a cabinet (i.e. for a TV in this case) is limited, where similar practice can be implemented in the game machine disclosed by Rasmussen et al, since it is known that reducing the space taken up by a gaming machine on the casino floor results in increased revenue as more and more gaming machines can be deployed as the size of these gaming machines decreases over time.

Therefore, for at least the reasons given, it would have been prima facie obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Rasmussen et al. with the teaches of Koizumi & Brawley, Jr. to obtain the invention as specified in at least claims 1, 5, 7-9, 11, 17, 19, & 24 as described in this section.

Regarding specifically the last limitation of claims 21-23, in the combination discussed above, the implementation of the sound transmitting passage disclosed by Brawley, Jr. would result in the passages (i.e. the left and right side walls of each passage) being substantially parallel to each other throughout their entireties thereof from the respective sound generating devices to the respective sound generating holes.

Claim 2: In the implementation of the combination disclosed above, it can be seen obvious that the sound transmitting holes on the front of the cabinet door are to be reformed to be the shape of the sound transmitting passage disclosed by Brawley, Jr., which is seen to be vertically elongated (figure 2

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of Brawley, Jr.). The combination also provides for having sound transmitting sections on either side of the opening on the front face of the cabinet.

Claim 4: The sound transmitting passages must be fixed to the cabinet in one way shape or form, as it can be seen that the passages cannot merely float in mid air.

Claim 6: The combination as discussed above discloses the rectangular cross sections of the sound transmitting passages to be elongated in the vertical direction as seen by the shape of the sound transmitting passage disclosed by Brawley, Jr. (figure 2).

Claim 10: Brawley, Jr. clearly discloses the sound transmitting passages have a top and bottom wall, which are connected by left and side trapezoidal walls as discussed above (figure 2 of Brawley, Jr.)

Claim 13: To further discussion above, it can be seen that the shorter bases of the trapezoidal side walls define an inlet for where the sound from the sound generating device enters or begins and the longer bases of the trapezoidal walls define the outlet where the sound eventually exits.

Claim 14: Brawley, Jr. discloses the walls are formed integrally all together (figure 2).

Claims 15 & 20: Brawley, Jr. discloses the sound generating device is disposed at the inlet of the passage and disposed entirely rearwardly from the sound transmitting holes (figure 2).

Claim 16: This limitation is discussed above with respect to at least claim 21

Response to Arguments

The Applicant's response to the objection of the Declaration is acknowledged and correct; the USPTO has recently issued an OG notice to remove the requirement to have a specific duty to disclose statement from applications filed earlier than June 1, 2008. Thus, the objection to the declaration is hereby withdrawn.

Applicant's arguments filed April 22, 2008, with respect to the pending claims, have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. As an initial note, the rejections set forth above are the same grounds of rejection set forth in the previous office action, however, they've been updated in accordance with the changes and amendments made by the Applicant (i.e. old claims 1 & 21 are new claim 21, as all the limitations from claim 1 were added to claim 21, and similarly for some other claims). Therefore, in view of the response below, this action is properly made FINAL.

The Applicant argues the combination of Brawley & Koizumi is improper because "the Examiner's proposal to replace the converging sound channels of Koizumi with the straight sound channels of Brawley would impermissibly change the principle operation of Koizumi and/or render the Koizumi sound setup unsatisfactory for its intended purpose" (Remarks, page 10). Further, the Applicant supports this assertion by discussing that Koizumi requires converging sound channels, for example, in the Title, arrows A & B in figure 2, and at least the last line of the abstract of the reference.

However, The Examiner respectfully submits that the Applicant's argument is non-commensurate with the rejections set forth in the previous office action. The rejections as presented above and in the previous office action states that Koizumi discloses/teaches a prior art display device that includes sound generating devices (i.e. figure 5, that is labeled "Prior Art"). The Koizumi reference, throughout the disclosure, refers to figure 5 at various times to discuss the Koizumi invention's alleged benefits over the known prior art. Koizumi's invention is directed to converging sound channels. However, the prior art disclosed within Koizumi is not directed specifically to converging sound channels, but rather, as is clear in figure 5, is directed to sound channels that are essentially parallel depending on one's perspective. Both channels have two side and top walls throughout their entireties, versus Koizumi's alleged improvement where only one side wall is necessary and the sound waves bounce off the sides of the cabinet or TV housing (figure 2). Thus, in view of Koizumi's discussion of the known prior art (figure 5), one skilled in

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the art would have found it an obvious matter of design choice or rather in view of Brawley, to implement sound transmitting passages or channels that are parallel and trapezoidal in shape as discussed in the rejections set forth above. Therefore, the Examiner concludes the Applicant's arguments are non-commensurate with the specific rejection set forth, and consequently, are not persuasive. The Examiner also notes that the Applicant's arguments directed to converging sound and that allegedly parallel channels render the Koizumi invention (i.e. not the prior disclosed by Koizumi) unsatisfactory for its intended purpose is moot, since the applied rejection is based on the prior art discussed within Koizumi and not specifically the Koizumi invention.

Accordingly, the Examiner maintains, in view of the combination of Rasmussen, Koizumi, and Brawley as set forth above, those of ordinary skill in the art having common knowledge and good sense would have found it an obvious matter to incorporate sound transmitting channels such as those disclosed within Koizumi into a gaming cabinet, such as the one disclosed by Rasmussen, and to further select a specific shape and structure of the sound transmitting passage to achieve a desired sound quality, such as the shape/structure taught by Brawley. All of the aspects of the claimed invention are known in the art, and due to various reasons, such as reducing overall noisiness in a casino, reducing power consumption of the speakers by outputting a low sound that is attenuated to a higher sound through the passages resulting in a more efficient sound system, or for a plethora of other reasons, those skilled would have been motivated to make such a combination.

Conclusion

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Milap Shah whose telephone number is (571)272-1723. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F: 9:30AM-6:00PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Robert Pezzuto can be reached on (571) 272-6996. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

/Robert E Pezzuto/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3714

/MBS/